

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1 and 4, without prejudice.

Please amend Claims 2, 3 and 5 -7 so as to read as follows:

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b2 2. (Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising at least:

input means for carrying out a distribution process of image information inputted through an image input mechanism;

storing means for storing an image inputted through the input means;

comparing means for comparing an image inputted through the input means with an image stored in the storing means; and

output means for outputting a result of comparison by the comparing means,

A3 wherein the comparing means includes calculating means for calculating a difference in pixel values which represent pixel densities, between an image newly inputted through the input means and an image stored in the storing means, and recognizing means for recognizing a portion common to the stored and newly input images by comparing an output of the calculating means with a preset threshold value, and

wherein the comparing means includes extracting means for causing the output means to output only pixels corresponding to pixels of the stored and newly input images respectively when the difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less than the threshold value.

3. (Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising at least:

input means for carrying out a distribution process of image information inputted through an image input mechanism;

storing means for storing an image inputted through the input means;

comparing means for comparing an image inputted through the input means with an image stored in the storing means; and

output means for outputting a result of comparison by the comparing means;

wherein the comparing means includes a calculating means for calculating a difference in pixel values, which represent pixel densities, between an image newly inputted through the input means and an image stored in the storing means, and recognizing means for recognizing a portion common to the stored and newly input images by comparing an output of the calculating means with a preset threshold value.

wherein at least three or more kinds of images are sequentially inputted to the input means;

the output means sequentially replaces an image stored in the storing means with an image outputted from the comparing means after each input of one of said kinds of images and prior to the next sequential input of another of said kinds of images; and

the recognizing means recognizes a portion common to each kind of image newly inputted through the input means and the image then stored in the storing means by comparing the images, and

wherein the comparing means includes extracting means for causing the output means to output only pixels corresponding to pixels of the stored and newly input images respectively when the difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less than the threshold value.

A3

5. (Amended) The image processing apparatus of claim 2, wherein the
comparing means further includes eliminating means for causing, when the
difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less
than the threshold value, the output means to output the inputted image and
the stored image as two images, while preventing pixels of said inputted and
stored images having a difference in pixel values equal to or less than the
threshold value from being outputted into the respective output images.

6. (Amended) The image processing apparatus of claim 5, further comprising:
selecting means for selecting one of the extracting means and the
eliminating means to be put into operation.

7. (Amended) The image processing apparatus of claim 2, further comprising:
setting means for allowing a user to set the threshold value.

Please add New Claims 8 and 9 as follows:

527 8. (New Claim) An image processing apparatus comprising at least:

input means for carrying out a distribution process of image information inputted through an image input mechanism;

storing means for storing an image inputted through the input means;

comparing means for comparing an image inputted through the input means with an image stored in the storage means; and

output means for outputting a result of comparison by the comparing means;

AS wherein the comparing means includes calculating means for calculating a difference in pixel values, which represent pixel densities, between an image newly inputted through the input means and an image stored in the storing means, and recognizing means for recognizing a portion common to the stored and newly input images by comparing an output of the calculating means with a preset threshold value, and

wherein the comparing means includes eliminating means for causing, when the difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less than the threshold value, the output means to output the inputted image and the stored image as two images, while preventing pixels of said inputted and stored images having a difference in pixel values equal to or less than the threshold value from being outputted into the respective output images.

9. (New Claim) The image processing apparatus of claim 8, further comprising:
setting means for allowing the user to set the threshold value.